



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New England District

696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751

Public Notice

In Reply Refer to: Jack Karalius
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Programs & Project
Management Division

Date: June 14, 2016

Comment Period Closes: July 14, 2016

30 DAY PUBLIC NOTICE

MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE FEDERAL NAVIGATION PROJECT IN THE HOUSATONIC RIVER, STRATFORD AND MILFORD, CONNECTICUT

Interested parties are hereby notified under provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (implementing regulations in 40 CFR 1500-1508 and 33 CFR 230) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (implementing regulations in 33 CFR 335-338), that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, plans to perform maintenance dredging of portions of the Federal navigation project in the Housatonic River, Stratford and Milford, Connecticut, involving work in the navigable waters of the United States. Attachment No. 1 lists pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

Project Description: The proposed work involves removal of up to 300,000 cubic yards (cy) of sandy material from shoal areas of the Housatonic River south of the Route 1 bridge. (See Attachment No. 2.) The Housatonic River Federal Navigation Project (FNP) was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1871 and modified by enactments in 1888 and 1892. The present project dimensions of the 18-foot channel were authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 3 July 1930 (H. Doc. 449, 70th Cong., 2nd Sess.). The existing Federal navigation project provides for an 18-foot deep, 200-foot wide main channel from the mouth of the river to the lower end of Culvers Bar (approximately five miles distance).

Character and Purpose of Work: Natural shoaling processes and storm events have reduced available depths in the lower sections of the Housatonic River. The 18-foot-deep authorized channel has numerous areas that have shoaled above the -18 foot mean lower low water (MLLW) plane. Some areas have shoaled to as shallow as -5 feet MLLW. Maintenance dredging of up to 300,000 cy of this sandy sediment will be required in order to restore most of the authorized depth and width of the channel. Both recreational and commercial vessels transit the river. Over 1,000 vessels are based in the river and harbor, including approximately 15 commercial vessels. Maintenance dredging will be performed using either a mechanical dredge or hopper dredge. The dredged sand will be transported and pumped directly onto Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison to renourish the eroding beach. For placement on the beach, pump-off equipment, such as

an unloader or booster pump, would be used to refluidize the dredged sand with seawater and discharge the slurry of water and sand onto the beach through a pipeline connection moored off the beach. The pipeline terminus would be either a moored, floating tie-in, or, mounted on a barge and spudded down a short distance offshore in water of sufficient depth to accommodate the draft of the vessel transporting the dredged sand. The proposed work will be performed over an approximately three to four month period between around October 1 and January 31 for shoals inside of Milford Point and October 1 through February 28 for shoals seaward of Milford Point in the year(s) in which funds become available and necessary approvals are received.

Placement Area: The material to be dredged has undergone physical and chemical analyses. Based on this data and a lack of potential sources of contaminants, the material has been found suitable for placement on Hammonasset Beach. The sand will renourish this eroding beach. See Attachment No. 3.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from Mr. Jack Karalius, Civil Works/IIS Project Management Branch, Programs & Project Management Division, at the return address shown, telephone number (978) 318-8288.

Coordination: The proposed work is being coordinated with the following Federal, State, and local agencies:

Federal:

Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service

State of Connecticut:

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Office of Long Island Sound Programs
Department of Agriculture (Bureau of Aquaculture)
Historical Commission
Department of Transportation
Hammonasset Beach State Park

Tribal Nations:

Mashantucket Pequot Tribe
Mohegan Tribe

Town of Stratford, CT:

Harbor Management Commission

Environmental Impacts: An Environmental Assessment for this work is being prepared and will be available for review upon request. I have made a preliminary determination that an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed maintenance dredging is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Federal Consistency with Connecticut's Coastal Zone Management Program: I find that maintenance dredging of the authorized navigation project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the state management program established as a result of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The dredging and placement operations will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the approved management program.

Other Information:

- a. Sponsor: The State of Connecticut is the sponsor for the proposed work.
- b. Previous Dredging: The most recent dredging activity was in November 2012 when the government-owned special-purpose dredge *Currituck* removed approximately 50,000 cubic yards (cy) of shoal material from the 18-foot channel and placed it in a nearshore location off Point No Point approximately three miles to the west.
- c. Alternate Placement Methods: Alternate placement options that have been considered include nearshore placement, open-ocean placement, beach placement, and upland placement. The State of Connecticut is the sponsor for this project, is providing funding, and prefers to beneficially utilize the sand to renourish the beach at Hammonasset Beach State Park, which has been eroding.
- d. Non-Federal Dredging: Currently no private dredging is being proposed in conjunction with this project. Facility owners within the river who may be interested in performing dredging concurrently with this project should be aware that work will require a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and, depending on the location of the dredged material disposal, may also require a Corps permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In order to be disposed of in open water, private dredged material must be determined to be suitable for such disposal.
- e. Endangered Species: It is our preliminary determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any threatened or endangered species. The Corps is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).
- f. Floodplain Management: In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.
- g. Cultural Resources: The proposed work consists of maintenance dredging of the FNP in previously dredged areas and placing the dredged material on a beach. This project

is not anticipated to affect any cultural or archaeological features or resources and is being coordinated with the Connecticut and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

- h. Essential Fish Habitat Assessment: It has been determined that the project may have a temporary adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The dredging site is contained within areas designated as EFH as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 for federally managed fish species. The Army Corps of Engineers has assessed the effects dredging is likely to have on EFH and has determined that they will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources. The Corps is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that all impacts will be minimized.


Additional Requirements: A request will be sent to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Office of Long Island Sound Programs for Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1341, and the State's concurrence with our determination of Federal consistency with the State's approved coastal zone management program.

The decision whether to perform the work will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, will be considered; among these are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, historic values, fish and wildlife values, flood damage prevention, land use classification, and the welfare of the people.

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by the dredging and placement of this material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to me within 30 days of the date of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751, ATTN: Jack Karalius, within 30 days of this notice.

13 JUN 2016
Date


Christopher J. Barron
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Attachment No. 1

PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1221 et. seq.)

Clean Water Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et. seq.)

Code of Federal Regulation, Title 33, Parts 335 through 338

Coastal Barrier Resources Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 [16 U.S.C. 1456(c)(1) and (2)], Sections 307(c)(1) and (2)

Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 668aa-668cc)

Estuary Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1221 et. seq.)

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-12 et. seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666c)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et. seq.)

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act as amended through January 12, 2007 and amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996

Migratory Marine Game-Fish Act (16 U.S.C. 760c-760g)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977

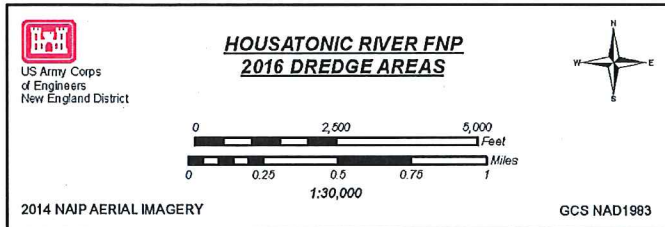
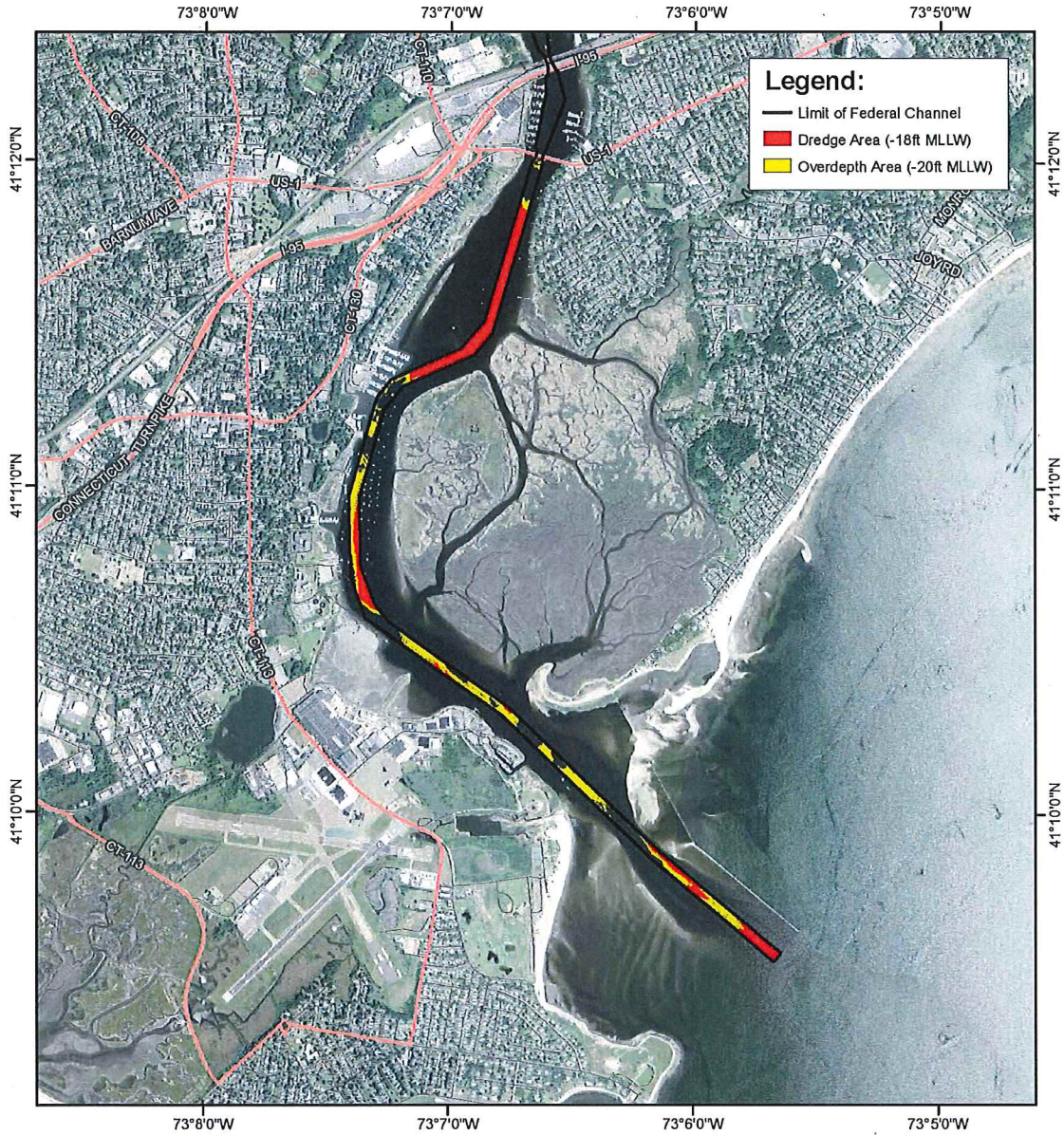
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, 21 April 1997

Attachment No. 2


Housatonic River Federal Navigation Project and Proposed Dredge Areas in Stratford and Milford, Connecticut




Attachment No. 3

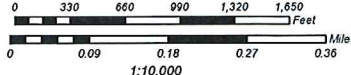
Map of placement site on Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, CT




US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District

**HOUSATONIC DREDGE MATERIAL
PLACEMENT SITE
HAMMONASSET BEACH STATE PARK
MADISON, CT**




0 330 660 990 1,320 1,650 Feet
0 0.09 0.18 0.27 0.36 Miles
1:10,000

NAIP AERIAL CT 2014

GCS NAD1983

